

Amendments to the Claims:

Please withdraw claims 1-12, 19, 20, 25, 30, and 36 from consideration.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the above-captioned application:

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Withdrawn) An exercise apparatus for enabling reciprocating motion of the user's legs or feet while the user remains generally stationary, ~~said~~the apparatus comprising:

a stationary frame;

a first longitudinal rail supported, at least partially, by ~~said~~the frame;

a second longitudinal rail supported, at least partially, by ~~said~~the frame and in generally parallel relation with ~~said~~the first rail;

a first foot carriage assembly movably engageable along ~~said~~the first rail and pivotally fixed to deflect angularly downward from an inactive position upon application of pressure thereon by a user;

a second foot carriage assembly movably engageable along ~~said~~the second rail and pivotally fixed to deflect angularly downward from an inactive position upon application of pressure thereon by ~~a~~the user;

an inertia drive assembly disposed proximate ~~said~~the first and second rails and drivable upon movable operation of at least one of ~~said~~the first and second carriage assemblies, ~~said~~the drive assembly including:

a first continuous belt rotatably engageable with ~~said~~the first carriage assembly, ~~said~~the first continuous belt being positioned relative to ~~said~~the first carriage assembly

such that ~~said~~the first continuous belt deflects downwardly upon engagement with ~~said~~the first carriage assembly; and

a second continuous belt rotatably engageable with ~~said~~the second carriage assembly, ~~said~~the second continuous belt being positioned relative to ~~said~~the ~~first~~second carriage assembly such that ~~said~~the second continuous belt deflects downwardly upon engagement with ~~said~~the second carriage assembly;

a first suspension system for supporting ~~said~~the first belt; and

a second suspension system for supporting ~~said~~the second belt;

wherein each of ~~said~~the first and second suspension systems includes a resilient support assembly responsive to deflection of ~~said~~the first and second belt upon frictional engagement between ~~said~~the first or second belt and one of ~~said~~the carriage assemblies.

2. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of ~~said~~the resilient support assemblies is interconnected with ~~said~~the first or second belt so as to add tension to ~~said~~the belt upon frictional engagement between ~~said~~the belt and one of ~~said~~the carriage assemblies and such that the added tension increases as ~~said~~the carriage assembly deflects further downwardly from ~~said~~the inactive position.

3. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of ~~said~~the resilient support assemblies includes a spring device interconnected with ~~said~~the first or second belt such that ~~said~~the spring device is resistant to deflection of ~~said~~the belt and such that the resistance of ~~said~~the spring device increases at a varying rate as ~~said~~the carriage assembly deflects further downwardly from ~~said~~the inactive position.

4. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein each of ~~said~~the resilient support assemblies includes a movable pulley interconnected with ~~said~~the spring device, such that ~~said~~the spring

device is resistant to shifting of said the movable pulley, said the first or second belt being rotatably supported about said the movable pulley.

5. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein said the movable pulley is supported on an arm member pivotable about a pivot point and shiftable upon deflection of said the first or second belt, said the movable pulley being arcuately movable about said the pivot point upon loading of said the belt by one of said the carriage assemblies.

6. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein each of said the carriage assemblies includes a coupling member having an engagement surface for frictionally engaging one of said the belts, wherein each of said the carriage assemblies is releasably pivotable from said the inactive position relative to one of said the belts to a position wherein said the engagement surface frictionally engages said the belt and is movable therewith, wherein each of said the belts is adapted to bias said the carriage assembly toward said the disengaged position.

7. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 6, further comprising a spring device interconnected with said the movable pulley and responsive to shifting of said the movable pulley, thereby biasing said the belt to urge said the carriage assembly toward said the disengaged position.

8. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said the drive assembly and said the first or second carriage assembly are interconnected such that, as said the first or second carriage assembly initially advances rearwardly or forwardly, said the drive assembly accelerates said the first or second carriage assembly up to a predetermined velocity without the user having to exert additional force to accelerate said the carriage assembly.

9. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein each of said the first and second carriage assemblies is frictionally engageable with one of said the first and second belts to drive said the

belt in a first direction when said the first or second carriage assemblies is moved in said the first direction, and wherein said the first or second carriage assemblies is disengageable from a substantially frictionally engaged relation with said the belt to move in a second direction opposite said the first direction.

10. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said the first and second carriage assemblies are interconnected by a common continuous belt such that said the first carriage assembly can be accelerated in said the second direction through movement of said the second belt by said the inertia drive assembly and said the second carriage assembly can be accelerated in said the second direction through movement of said the first belt by said the inertia drive assembly, wherein said the common continuous belt interconnects said the first carriage assembly and said the second carriage assembly such that when said the first carriage assembly is moved one direction, said the second carriage assembly is moved in an opposite direction.

11. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said the inertia drive assembly includes a drive shaft and a first energy device rotatably coupled with said the drive shaft, said the inertia drive assembly being disposed proximate said the first and second rails and engageable with said the first and second carriage assemblies such that, as said the first or second carriage assembly initially advances from a point of change in direction along one of said the rails, said the first energy device can accelerate said the carriage assembly; and

a second energy device distinct from said the first energy device, said the second energy device being engageable with said the inertia drive assembly and adapted to transmit energy thereto.

12. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said the carriage assemblies and said the suspension systems are positioned such that each said the carriage assembly is pivotable from said the inactive position to a second position whereat said the carriage assembly is disposed in a

generally horizontal orientation, ~~said~~the increase in spring resistance being substantially more pronounced as ~~said~~the carriage assembly moves closer to ~~said~~the second position.

13. (Currently Amended) An exercise apparatus for enabling reciprocating motion of the user's legs or feet while the user remains generally stationary, ~~said~~the apparatus comprising:

- a stationary frame;

- a first longitudinal rail supported, at least partially, by ~~said~~the frame;

- a second longitudinal rail supported, at least partially, by ~~said~~the frame and in generally parallel relation with ~~said~~the first rail;

- a first foot carriage assembly movably engageable along ~~said~~the first rail and pivotally fixed such that ~~said~~the first foot carriage assembly deflects angularly downward through an angular path from an inactive position upon application of pressure thereon by a user;

- a second foot carriage assembly movably engageable along ~~said~~the second rail and pivotally fixed such that ~~said~~the second foot carriage assembly deflects angularly downward through an angular path from an inactive position upon application of pressure thereon by ~~a~~the user;

- an inertia device disposed proximate ~~said~~the first and second rails and drivable upon movable operation of at least one of ~~said~~the first and second carriage assemblies;

- a first resilient support assembly positioned relative to ~~said~~the first carriage assembly so as to be responsive to angular deflection of ~~said~~the first carriage assembly by imparting a resistant force on ~~said~~the first carriage assembly and against pressure applied thereon; and

- a second resilient support assembly positioned relative to ~~said~~the second carriage assembly so as to be responsive to angular deflection of ~~said~~the second carriage assembly by imparting a resistant force on ~~said~~the second carriage assembly and against pressure applied thereon, wherein each ~~said~~the resilient support assembly is configured such that ~~said~~the resistant force increases at a varying rate as ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly deflects through ~~said~~the angular path.

14. (Currently Amended) The exercise apparatus of claim 13, wherein each ~~said~~the resilient support ~~assemblies-assembly~~ includes a spring extendable upon angular deflection of ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly, to impart a resistant force thereon.

15. (Currently Amended) The exercise apparatus of claim ~~15~~14, wherein ~~said~~the spring is interconnected with ~~said~~the carriage assembly such that ~~said~~the spring extends at a generally increasing rate as ~~said~~the carriage assembly deflects through ~~said~~the angular path.

16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein ~~said~~the angular path of each ~~said~~the carriage assemblies extends from ~~said~~the inactive position to a position corresponding to a generally horizontal position of ~~said~~the carriage assembly.

17. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein ~~said~~the resilient support assembly is configured such that the resistant force imparted by ~~said~~the spring is substantially increased as ~~said~~the carriage assembly approaches ~~said~~the generally horizontal position.

18. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein ~~said~~the resilient support assembly includes a crank interconnecting ~~said~~the spring with ~~said~~the carriage assembly.

19. (Withdrawn) The exercise apparatus of claim 14, wherein each ~~said~~the resilient support assembly includes a continuous belt rotatably engageable with ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly, ~~said~~the continuous belt being positioned relative to ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly such that ~~said~~the continuous belt deflects downwardly upon engagement with ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly; and

wherein ~~said~~the continuous belt is operatively positioned intermediate ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly and ~~said~~the spring is interconnected with ~~said~~the spring such that

downward deflection of ~~said~~the continuous belt linearly extends ~~said~~the spring at a rate that increases as ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly deflects through ~~said~~the angular path.

20. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein each of ~~said~~the resilient support assemblies includes a movable pulley rotatably supporting ~~said~~the first or second continuous belt, ~~said~~the movable pulley being supported on an arm member pivotable about a pivot point and shiftable upon deflection of ~~said~~the first or second belt, such that ~~said~~the movable pulley is arcuately movable about ~~said~~the pivot point upon loading of ~~said~~the belt by one of ~~said~~the carriage assemblies, and wherein ~~said~~the spring device is interconnected with ~~said~~the movable pulley such that ~~said~~the spring device is resistant to shifting of ~~said~~the movable pulley.

21. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein each ~~said~~the resilient support assembly includes an elastic band supportably engageable with ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly and stretchable upon angular deflection of ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly.

22. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein each ~~said~~the resilient support assembly includes a cam surface positioned intermediate ~~said~~the carriage assembly and ~~said~~the elastic band, ~~said~~the cam surface being engageable with ~~said~~the elastic band upon deflection of ~~said~~the first or second carriage assemblies.

23. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 22, wherein each ~~said~~the cam surface is shaped such that, as ~~said~~the carriage assembly deflects through ~~said~~the angular path, an area of engagement between ~~said~~the cam surface and ~~said~~the elastic band shifts ~~said~~the elastic band imparts ~~said~~the resistant force on ~~said~~the carriage assembly at an increasing rate.

24. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein ~~said~~the resilient support assembly is characterized by a non-linear spring constant.

25. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein each ~~said~~the resilient support assembly is fixed to ~~said~~the first or second longitudinal rail.

26. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein each ~~said~~the resilient support assembly includes an elastic device and an intermediate deflection element operatively positioned intermediate ~~said~~the elastic device and ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly such that ~~said~~the intermediate element is directly engageable with ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly and movably responsive to angular deflection of ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly, and wherein ~~said~~the elastic device is directly engageable with ~~said~~the intermediate element such that movement of ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element in response to angular deflection of ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly causes ~~said~~the elastic device to stretch and impart a resistant force thereon.

27. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 26, wherein ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element is directly movably responsive to angular deflection of ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly, and ~~said~~the elastic device is positioned relative to ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element such that movement of ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element stretches ~~said~~the elastic device at a rate that increases as ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly moves through ~~said~~the angular path.

28. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 26, wherein ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element is a crank attached to ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly, and ~~said~~the elastic device is a linearly extendable spring attached to ~~said~~the crank.

29. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 26, wherein ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element is a cam surface directly attached to ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly and ~~said~~the elastic device includes an elastic band supportably engageable with ~~said~~the cam surface.

30. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 26, wherein ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element includes a continuous belt supportably engageable with ~~said~~the carriage assembly and a moveable pulley shiftable upon deflection of ~~said~~the continuous belt, and wherein ~~said~~the elastic device includes a linearly extendable spring interconnected with ~~said~~the moveable pulley.

31. (Currently Amended) An exercise apparatus for enabling reciprocating motion of the user's legs or feet while the user remains generally stationary, ~~said~~the apparatus comprising:

- a stationary frame;

- a first longitudinal rail supported, at least partially, by ~~said~~the frame;

- a second longitudinal rail supported, at least partially, by ~~said~~the frame and in generally parallel relation with ~~said~~the first rail;

- a first foot carriage assembly movably engageable along ~~said~~the first rail and pivotally fixed to deflect angularly downward from an inactive position through an angular path upon application of pressure thereon by a user;

- a second foot carriage assembly movably engageable along ~~said~~the second rail and pivotally fixed to deflect angularly downward from an inactive position through an angular path upon application of pressure thereon by a ~~a~~the user;

- an inertia device disposed proximate ~~said~~the first and second rails and drivable upon movable operation of at least one of ~~said~~the first and second carriage assemblies; and

- a first resilient support assembly positioned relative to ~~said~~the first carriage assembly such that a resistant force is imparted on ~~said~~the first carriage assembly in response to angular deflection thereof; and

a second resilient support assembly positioned relative to ~~said~~the second carriage assembly such that a resistant force is imparted on ~~said~~the second carriage assembly in response to angular deflection thereof; and

wherein each ~~said~~the resilient support assembly is configured such that ~~said~~the resistant force increases at a non-linear rate as ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly deflects through ~~said~~the angular path.

32. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein each ~~said~~the resilient support assembly includes an elastic device and an intermediate deflection element operatively positioned intermediate ~~said~~the elastic device and ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly such that ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element is directly engageable with ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly and movably responsive to angular deflection of ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly, and wherein ~~said~~the elastic device is directly engageable with ~~said~~the intermediate element such that movement of ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element in response to angular deflection of ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly causes ~~said~~the elastic device to stretch and impart a resistant force thereon.

33. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element is directly movably responsive to angular deflection of ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly, and ~~said~~the elastic device is positioned relative to ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element such that movement of ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element stretches ~~said~~the elastic device at a rate that increases as ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly moves through ~~said~~the angular path.

34. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element includes a linkage assembly pivotally attached with ~~said~~the first or second carriage

assembly, and ~~said~~the elastic device is a linearly extendable spring connected with ~~said~~the linkage assembly.

35. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element is a cam surface directly attached to ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly, and ~~said~~the elastic device includes an elastic band supportably engageable with ~~said~~the cam surface.

36. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element includes a continuous belt supportably engageable with ~~said~~the carriage assembly and a movable pulley shiftable upon deflection of ~~said~~the continuous belt, and wherein ~~said~~the elastic device includes a spring interconnected with ~~said~~the movable pulley such that ~~said~~the spring is linearly extendable in response to shifting of ~~said~~the movable pulley.

37. (Currently Amended) The exercise apparatus of claim 32, wherein ~~said~~the elastic device includes a spring extendable upon angular deflection of ~~said~~the first or second carriage assembly, ~~said~~the spring being interconnected with ~~said~~the intermediate deflection element and ~~said~~the carriage assembly such that ~~said~~the spring extends at a generally increasing rate as ~~said~~the carriage assembly deflects through ~~said~~the angular path.

38. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein ~~said~~the angular path of each ~~said~~the carriage assembly extends from ~~said~~the inactive position to a position corresponding to a generally horizontal position of ~~said~~the carriage assembly.